

Message Text

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ACTION A-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 EB-07 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1766
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 4124

DEPARTMENT FOR A, WHITE HOUSE FOR MS. MARY HOYT, PRESS
SECRETARY TO MRS. CARTER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, BR (CARTER, ROSALYNN)
SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN PRESS AND MRS. CARTER'S VISIT

REF: STATE 104923

1. FOLLOWING COMMENTS RESPOND TO REQUIREMENT CONTAINED
PARA 7, REFTTEL REGARDING PRESS SITUATION IN BRAZIL:

2. DIRECT CENSORSHIP WAS SUSPENDED (WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS)
FAIRLY EARLY IN THE GEISEL REGIME, BUT
BRAZILIAN DAILIES AND MAGAZINES STILL ADOPT "SELF-CENSORSHIP,"
WHICH TO SOME EXTENT RESTRICTS THEIR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW PROSPEROUS ORGANS, BRAZILIAN
PUBLICATIONS DEPEND ON THE GOB FOR ADVERTISING REVENUES
AND CAN BE SUBJECTED TO SANCTIONS THAT RANGE FROM WITHHOLDING
ADVERTISING TO "DIFFICULTIES" IN OBTAINING THEIR QUOTA OF
PAPER--MOST OF WHICH IS IMPORTED UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.
THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION'S COMMITTEE ON FREEDOM
OF THE PRESS, MEETING IN COLOMBIA IN PARIL (BRASILIA 3047)
DECLARED FREEDOM OF THE PRESS NON-EXISTENT IN BRAZIL,
SPECIFYING IN ITS CONCLUSIONS THAT "EIGHT PUBLICATIONS
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ARE SUBJECT TO PRIOR CENSORSHIP; PUBLICATIONS CANNOT
APPLY TO COURTS TO SEEK SUSPENSION OF CENSORSHIP;
CRITICISM OF THE REGIME HAS PROVOKED DISCRIMINATION;
THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROHIBITED PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION
ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAS CONFISCATED EDITIONS OF SOME
PUBLICATIONS FOR HAVING CARRIED SUCH NEWS." WE AGREE
IN GENERAL WITH COMMITTEE'S CONCLUSIONS, BUT DO NOT BELIEVE

THEY ADD UP TO A TOTAL ABSENCE OF FREEDOM FOR THE WRITTEN PRESS. BRAZILIAN PRESS IS FULL OF CLEVER JOURNALISTS WITH BROAD BACKGROUNDS CAPABLE OF PROBING EXACTLY GOVERNMENT'S VULNERABILITIES AND FINDING A WAY AROUND CENSORSHIP STANDARDS TO GET GOOD PART OF THEIR STORY ON THE STREETS. MAJOR DAILIES SUCH AS O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO AND JORNAL DO BRASIL ARE AS GOOD AS ANY IN THE WORLD AND REPORT CRITICALLY ON FULL RANGE OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN ISSUES, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS. (I.G., THE US REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN BRAZIL WAS PUBLISHED IN FULL.) THESE NEWSPAPERS PRINT SOME STINGINGLY CRITICAL COMMENTARIES ON GOB OFFICIALS AND POLICIES. REAL OR POTENTIAL THREAT OF GOVERNMENT REPRISALS AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES AGAINST THOSE ABUSING STANDARDS OF SELF-CENSORSHIP THAT GOVERNMENT PREFERS DO HOWEVER TAKE A TOLL AND INHIBIT JOURNALISTIC ATTITUDES.

3. INTERNATIONAL NEWS RECEIVES GOOD COVERAGE IN THE LEADING BRAZILIAN DAILIES, ALTHOUGH NOT IN THE MASS-APPEAL PAPERS. US FOREIGN POLICY IS GENERALLY SUPPORTED BY OPINION-MAKING DAILIES. AN IMPORTANT EXCEPTION IS US POLICY ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, WHICH THE PRESS INTERPRETS AS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY AIMED AT TERMINATING THE BRAZIL-WEST GERMAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT--ON WHICH POINT THEY GIVE STRONG SUPPORT TO THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT. US DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS SEEN IN A MORE BALANCED WAY, AS A RESULT OF THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION AND BECAUSE OF A FEW WELL-CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLICIZED CASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

4. RIO DE JANEIRO AND SAO PAULO ARE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL PRESS CENTERS IN BRAZIL; THEIR LEADING DAILIES ARE READ ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, ARE THE TRUE NATIONAL OPINION MAKERS, LEAVING FOR THE LOCAL DAILIES THE ROLE OF MERE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS.

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WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 4124

DEPARTMENT FOR A, WHITE HOUSE FOR MS. MARY HOYT, PRESS
SECRETARY TO MRS. CARTER

--RIO DE JANEIRO PAPERS: MOST INFLUENTIAL IS
JORNAL DO BRASIL -- INDEPENDENT, CONSERVATIVE, INCREAS-
INGLY CRITICAL OF GOB DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICIES,
BUT VULNERABLE TO GO ECONOMIC PRESSURES WHICH HAVE
BEEN USED FROM TIME TO TIME; PRO-US IN INTERNATIONAL
ISSUES, EVEN -- ALTHOUGH DISCREETLY -- FAVORING
USG NUCLEAR POLICY. O GLOBE -- CONSERVATIVE, COM-
PLETELY PRO-GOB, BUT SUPPORTS US GLOBAL FOREIGN
POLICY IN MOST ASPECTS.

--SAO PAULO PAPERS: O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO -- BRAZIL'S
MOST INFLUENTIAL AND MOST INDEPENDENT PAPER; STRONGLY
ANTI-COMMUNIST, SUPPORTS US FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL
BUT IS "COLD-WARISH" AND OPPOSES "DETENTE." FREQUENT
CRITIC OF BRAZIL'S THIRD WORLD POLICIES. FOLHA
DE SAO PAULO -- LIBERAL IN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS, GENERALLY SUPPORTS US FOREIGN POLICY.

--BRASILIA PAPERS: THERE ARE TWO IMPORTANT, BUT SMALL
CIRCULATION, DAILIES IN THE BRAZILIAN CAPITAL, JORNAL DE
BRASILIA AND CORREIO BRAZILIENSE; BOTH FOLLOW THE GOB'S
FOREIGN POLICY LINE, FREQUENTLY TAKING STRONGLY
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NATIONALISTIC POSITIONS.

5. FOR MOST PART MRS. CARTER WILL ENCOUNTER A FRIENDLY
PRESS, BUT ONE EAGER TO DRAW HER OUT ON HER HUSBAND'S
POLICY TOWARDS BRAZIL OR TO PUSH HER TOWARDS A
PROVOCATIVE STATEMENT REGARDING THE GEISEL GOVERNMENT.
AS WAS THE CASE WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN'S
VISIT, SHE MAY FACE LEADING QUESTIONS SUCH AS "HOW
DOES IT FEEL TO BE IN A COUNTRY WITH A RECORD FOR ABUSE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS." SHE MAY ALSO FIND HER COMMENTS ARE
SELECTIVELY REPORTED BY SOME NEWSPAPERS TOTALLY COMMITTED

TO THE GOVERNMENT'S LINE. THERE ARE NO TABOOS IN DEALING WITH PRESS BEYOND NORMAL LIMITS OF GOOD TASTE. THE PRESS WILL BE HIGHLY RESPONSIVE TO HER HUMAN TRAITS, FINDING EVIDENCE OF A SENSE OF HUMOR AND ANY LACK OF OSTENTATION APPEALING. SMILES, SIMPLICITY AND DIGNITY, WILL GO FAR IN CONDITIONING THE REPORTING OF HER VISIT. SHE WILL BE DEALING WITH NEWSPEOPLE WHO, AS INDIVIDUALS, ARE IDEOLOGICALLY COMFORTABLE AND SUPPORTIVE OF HER HUSBAND'S VIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ALTHOUGH PERSONAL VIEWS MAY NOT EMERGE IN THEIR WRITING. BOTH THEY AND THEIR PAPERS ARE HIGHLY NATIONALISTIC ABOUT US PRESSURES TOWARDS THE FRG-GOB NUCLEAR ACCORD OR ANY SIGNS OF US DENIGRATION OF BRAZILIAN CONCEPTS OF BRAZIL'S "GRANDEZA" AND INEVITABLE ROLE AS A GLOBAL POWER. MOST POWERFUL WAY FOR HER TO MAKE HER MESSAGE WILL BE WITH AN ADMISSION THAT US IS NOT PERFECT AND WE TOO SEEK IMPROVEMENTS FOR OURSELVES AS WELL AS FOR REST OF THE WORLD, OR TO STRESS US ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF EACH NATION'S SOVEREIGNTY AND PREROGATIVE TO CHOOSE ITS OWN WAY.

6. WE BELIEVE MOST UNPREDICATABLE ASPECT OF REPORTING HER VISIT WILL CENTER ON HOW THE SUBSTANTIVE ROLE SHE WILL PLAY HERE. BRAZILIANS ARE NOT COMFORTABLE, PARTICULARLY IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES, WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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NON-TRADITIONAL ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT. SOME CHAUVINISTS MAY TRY TO INJECT THEIR OUTDATED CONCEPTS OF FEMININE ROLE INTO BACKGROUND REPORTING ON VISIT THROUGH SNIDE, SEXIST COMMENTS DENIGRATING HER SUSTANTIVE ROLE. BUT MAJORITY OF BIG CITY PRESS IS PROBABLY IMMUNE TO THIS SORT OF THINKING AND WILL TEND TO ACCEPT MRS. CARTER'S PERFORMANCE FOR WHAT IT IS. WE HOPE VISIT WILL IN FACT SERVE TO POINT OUT EMERGING MODERN ROLE OF WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF US AND OTHER MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES.

7. SEPTTEL FOLLOWS WITH PRESS QUESTIONS MOST LIKELY TO ARISE IN MRS. CARTER'S ENCOUNTERS WITH PRESS.

8. SEPTTEL ON RECIFE PRESS FOLLOWS.
CRIMMINS

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Message Attributes

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